CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus comprising:

a processor;

a framer controlled by the processor;

a memory coupled to the processor, the memory storing a first set of configuration information and a second set of configuration information, the first set to configure the framer to communicate across a communication network using a first networking protocol, the second set of configuration information to configure the framer to communicate across a communication network using a second networking protocol; and

an interface module having a network interface and to detect a networking protocol for which the apparatus should be configured.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the interface module comprises:

a connector to couple the framer to the communication network, the connector having a plurality of contacts, a first contact of the plurality grounded;

a resistor coupled between a power supply and a second contact of the connector; and

a detector coupled to the second contact to detect a voltage at the second contact, the detector driving a selection between the first set of configuration information and the second set of configuration information.

3. ~~A system~~ comprising:

a first networking device operating in a first networking protocol;

a cable coupled to the first networking device;

a second networking device coupled to the cable, the second networking device automatically identifying from the cable the first networking protocol and driving itself into the first networking protocol.

4. The system of claim 3 wherein the cable has a connector at each end, the connector having a plurality of unused contacts, and wherein the second networking device has a power supply coupled through a resistor to at least one unused contact when the cable is coupled to the second device.

5. The system of claim 4 wherein the second networking device comprises:

a network interface module that identifies the cable protocol.

6. The system of claim 5 wherein the detector signals a software switch which selects a first set of configuration data to configure the device in a first protocol if the voltage is at the predetermined level and selects a second set of configuration data to configure the device in a second protocol if the voltage is not at the predetermined level.

7. The system of claim 4 wherein the second networking device comprises:

a detector to identify if a voltage at the cable side of the resistor is at a predetermined level.

8. The system of claim 3 wherein the cable has an RJ-48 connector at a first end and a BNC connector at an opposing end.

9. A method comprising:

coupling a pair of networking devices together with a cable;

detecting in a first device of the pair from the cable a mode of the second device; and

driving the first device into the protocol detected.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the protocol is one of T1, E1 balanced, and E1 unbalanced.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein detecting comprises:

watching an unused contact of a cable connector for a predetermined voltage level.